

# Online Tutorials for Information Services: A Case Study of IITM-K

P Sainul Abideen

T S Sreekutty

T P Yunus

## Abstract

*Widespread use of Computer based products and services in libraries necessitated special training to its users. These compelled libraries to create tutorials for user education programmes. This case study describes the experience of Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management-Kerala in utilizing online tutorials for the user education programmes.*

*Discusses about tutorials and different types of tutorials like offline and online tutorials. Explains applications of online tutorials in libraries, giving special importance to 'Wink', which is a free software for developing screen capture tutorials. Describes the features of 'Wink' and advantages of screen capture tutorials for libraries. Also gives an overview of how IITMK library made use of online tutorials for providing user training on different web based information services, for providing e-learning for library staff, for library publicity and for training library professionals. Also highlights the professional training initiatives undertaken by the library and in developing online tutorials in local language.*

**Keywords:** Online Tutorials, Wink, e-learning, User Education

## 1. Introduction

Emergence of e-only resources, requirement from users for e-resources, and availability of suitable communication mechanisms etc have compelled libraries to provide electronic information services. In order to provide such speedy services, libraries are equipping themselves with different tools, which enable web-based information dissemination. Accordingly, libraries are using different Information products like Online databases, e-journals, CD ROM based products, Online Catalogues, Information Consolidation packages, and Software products for Library Automation, Digital Libraries, Web based information services etc.

Traditionally libraries undertake user education programmes to orient their users about effective utilization of their services which were, sometimes, supplemented with user manuals or library brochures etc. However, in the light of electronic information services, it has become more vital for Library professionals to train their users on the use of such products having varying functionalities and interfaces for the effective utilization of these resources. Nevertheless, such trainings require time and efforts from the Library and information professionals.

Moreover, shortage of adequate manpower in some of the libraries calls for a facility wherein the users can learn about different products and services by the help of online interactive, self instructional, tutorials at their own pace. Provision of such



interactive tutorials enhances the usage of such information products, which might have procured by spending hefty amount.

Similarly, many institutions are organizing training on different tools for information services including that of Digital Library development tools like GenIisWeb, Dspace, Greenstone, Eprint, Library automation software like ABCD, NewGenLib etc. Such training events can also be supplemented with an online, self-instructional material with step-by-step instruction, e.g. an installation guide to Dspace or Cataloguing module of ABCD, Import/Export data in WinIis etc. Such self-instructional materials can be reused by the learner for better understanding of the concerned process or procedure. Such tutorials can also be used by Libraries for training their staff on the use of such software products.

## 2. Tutorials

A tutorial is a mode of communication of ideas and knowledge in a predefined and systematic manner. Tutorials are more effective than a classroom teaching as it explains all key features of the topic in a more illustrative and in a simple step-by-step manner.

According to Wikipedia “tutorial is one method of transferring knowledge and may be used as a part of learning. More interactive and specific than a book or a lecture; a tutorial seeks to teach by example and supply the information to complete a certain task.”[6]

According to Webopedia, a tutorial is “an instructional lesson that leads the user through key features and functions of things such as software applications, hardware devices, Processes, system designs, and programming languages. The tutorial typically is set up as a series of steps that progress

through levels of difficulty and understanding. For this reason, the tutorial is best followed in its logical sequence in order to understand all of the elements of what the user is trying to learn.” [5]

Tutorials are more explanatory which may contain pictures, graphics, tables, etc. So users of the tutorials get more meaningful information about the concerned topic.

## 3. Types of Tutorials

There are mainly two types of tutorials. They are Offline and Online tutorials

### 3.1 Offline Tutorials

Offline tutorials are traditional form of tutorials, mainly in the printed format like self-learning handbooks, manuals, etc. Being a non-electronic format, they lack audiovisual capabilities.

### 3.2 Online Tutorials

Tutorials in the electronic format constitute online tutorials. Such tutorials may be created using any of the electronic means like Word Processor, Presentation Software, Hypertext, Audio, Video, imaging/animation software or Screen Capturing Software. This paper discuss mainly on tutorials created using screen capturing software.

#### 3.2.1 Screen Capturing Tutorial

Tutorials created using screenshots which are captured automatically or manually are called screen-capturing tutorials. Screen-capturing softwares can record everything on the computer screen including mouse movement, and, can generate tutorials, demos and online help videos for web sharing and technical support. These tutorials usually contain additional callouts, explanations, buttons, audio, etc. Screen capturing

tutorials produces high quality presentations and it can be used for both online and offline presentations.

### 3.3 Applications of Online Tutorials in Libraries

Online tutorials can be used in many areas including that of e-learning, software demonstration, marketing, advertising, etc. In education these are used as an aid to normal ways of teaching, especially for e-learning.

Libraries are using the online tutorials mainly for:

- ◆ **User Education** on Electronic Information Products and Services.
- ◆ **Staff Training:** Training on the applications of the Softwares used in Library services can be facilitated with tutorials, while new staff joins in a library or an existing staff is moved to a new section, where a specific software is in use.
- ◆ **Library Publicity:** For publicizing and promotion of the library services in their website and in offline mode. Such promotional material gives a visual impact of the facility without need of providing direct access to actual resource outside the organization.
- ◆ **Library demonstration** to higher authorities and funding agencies.
- ◆ Create e-learning materials for different Softwares used for Library Automation, Digital Library, Information Retrieval etc.
- ◆ Marketing of the Information Products developed by the Libraries.
- ◆ Demonstration of Library Websites.
- ◆ Knowledge management in libraries.

### 4. Software for Screen Capture Tutorials

Commercial and free software products are available for the creation of online tutorials.

Commercial softwares are costly and generally not affordable to libraries.

‘Wink’ is a freely available screen capturing software, which can create perfect screen capturing tutorials. Wink is developed for DebugMode by S. Satish Kumar [1].

Wink is a software tool to make presentation and tutorials about using software programs. A wink presentation will resemble a live walkthrough about how to use the software [4]. It can be freely downloaded from <http://debugmode.com/wink/>. ‘Wink’ can capture screenshots, add explanation boxes, buttons, titles, etc and generate highly effective tutorials. Wink provides facility for exporting the tutorials to Flash, HTML, PDF or as a stand-alone executable file. The basic output of the Wink tutorial is a flash file.

Wink helps capture screenshots of software/website, use images that already have, type explanations for each step, create a navigation sequence complete with each buttons, delays, titles, etc and create high quality tutorials.

### 5. Features of Wink

- ◆ **Freeware:** Wink is a freely downloadable software for personal or commercial use
- ◆ **Cross-Platform:** It is available for all flavors of Windows and various versions of Linux (x86 only)
- ◆ **Audio:** Voice can be recorded to add descriptions for each slide.
- ◆ **Input Formats:** The input formats of wink is images in BMP/JPG/PNG/TIFF/GIF formats or it can capture screenshots from PC
- ◆ **Output Formats:** Output formats may be Macromedia Flash, Standalone EXE, PDF, PostScript, HTML or any of the above image formats. Use Flash/html for the web, EXE for distributing to PC users and PDF for printable manuals.
- ◆ **Multilingual Support:** It works in English, French, German, Italian, Danish, Spanish,

Serbian, Japanese, Brazilian Portuguese and Simplified/Traditional Chinese

- ◆ **Smart Capture Tools:** It captures screenshots automatically based on mouse and keyboard input
- ◆ **Performance/Quality:** It creates highly compressed Flash presentations ideal for using on the web.
- ◆ **User Forum:** DebugMode maintains an active discussion forum called 'Wink-Discuss' for Wink Users [2]

## 6. Advantages of Screen Capture Tutorials for Libraries

- ◆ Wink is a cost effective solution for libraries. Similar software products cost Thousands of rupees.
- ◆ Output can be generated in different formats like PDF, HTML and Standalone EXE depends on the requirement of the Library
- ◆ Library staff can save lot of time used for training its users
- ◆ Users can learn about the Information Products and Services based on their time availability.
- ◆ Increases the use of e-resources, which are generally costly.
- ◆ As tutorials can be played offline on stand alone PCs, it save library's Internet time and bandwidth.
- ◆ Facility for illustration in local language facilitate the tutorials in local languages also. Which will be very useful for the Public Libraries.

## 7. Digital Library and Information Services Division of IITMK

Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management-Kerala [3] was established by the Government of Kerala. IITMK offers its Digital Library services using GenIsisWeb- a Free and

Open Source Software. The 'Mu-Di' Multimedia Digital Library has more than 1200 hrs of streaming video lectures of Class lectures, Seminars, Workshops etc. Digital Library also has a collection 100% digital collection of theses and reports. Thousands of e-books are available online through 'E-resources Digital Library'. IITM-K Library hosts a free/Open Source Software Library called 'Soft Tools' with more than 12,000 software products. Digital Library division has developed a non-commercial E-journals Gateway system. The 'E-Patrika Newspaper Portal' provides access to more than 200 online newspapers published from various parts of the country.

Digital Library division has been working on GenIsisWeb Technology and developed several Digital Library, WebOPAC, e-Journals Gateway, Image gallery, etc. It also specialized in the applications of Wink, and Web2.0 tools for Information Services. Library has an information Service blog (<http://iitmklibrary.blogspot.com>) and maintains information aggregation portal in Chemistry. In Asia-Pacific Region, IITMK Librarian is Coordinating the development and application of the Open Source Library Automation Software called ABCD developed by BIREME, Brazil.

IITMK library helps other libraries in developing their digital libraries, library automation, modernisation etc.

More than 50 libraries across the country have benefited from us in establishing advanced Information services. IITM-K Library is also extending consultancy service, organises training programmes, and workshops for the information professionals in the above and related areas. More than 75 Library professionals have undergone

training organised by the Digital Library Division in the past two years. Library also offers Digital Library Internship programme for the Fresh Library Science Graduates.

## 8. Applications of Online Tutorials in IITM-K Library

IITMK Library has been using Screen Capture Tutorials using 'Wink' Software for:

- ◆ User Training
- ◆ Internal Staff Training
- ◆ Professional Training
- ◆ Library Publicity
- ◆ Answering queries on different software Products

### 8.1 User Training in Library

Due to the presence of various information products and services- with varying interface and functionality- mentioned in the previous section, it was necessary for IITM-K library to offer extensive training programmes for its users. As number of such products and services was increasing, it was decided to develop online Tutorials for them to supplement such training programs. Different solutions were explored like videos, Flash based tutorials, online and printed manuals etc. But all of them were not very effective. So, it was decided to use Screen Capturing tools to create Self Instructional Tutorials. Accordingly different such commercial software tools were explored and it was found very costly. Hence we examined alternatives and found that 'Wink' is being extensively used across the world for developing Self Instructional Tutorials and which is having almost all functionalities available in commercial Software.

Digital Library and Information Services Division of IITM-K developed many useful self-

instructional tutorials using Wink. Library uses these tutorials for several purposes as discussed below.

#### 8.1.1 On line Tutorial for WebOPAC

This tutorial helps users make effective search using appropriate search strategy in the WebOPAC of the

institute library. This tutorial explains the method of searching; different criteria for searching, including that of Multi-database search, etc This provides a handy mechanism for understanding the working of the WebOPAC. This tutorial can be accessed online at: <http://www.iitmk.ac.in/wink/olis.htm>

#### 8.1.2 On line Tutorial for Multimedia Digital Library (MuDil)

'MuDil' contains video lectures delivered in the institute. Users can access these lectures online from their computer round the clock. Library has created a tutorial for 'MuDil' to train the users about the method of searching for video lectures on a particular topic or lectures delivered by particular person or lectures delivered in a particular year, type etc.

#### 8.1.3 On line Tutorial for Software Library and CD ROM Catalogue

These are tutorials for training the users on how to search the availability of the CDs and software in the library.

#### 8.1.4 On line Tutorials for e-Journals Gateway

Library has an e-journals gateway incorporating the subscribed and Open Access Journals from various Sources. E-journals gateway is an integrated search and retrieval engine for all journals. Journals can be searched based on its title, subject area, subscription database, etc. This is created using GenIsisWeb. This tutorial illustrates the

information retrieval mechanism, broadening and narrowing of the search, etc.

### **8.1.5 On line Tutorial for the Digital Library of Project Reports**

Digital Library of Project Reports contains the electronic full text report of all projects of IITM-K Students. Tutorials are created to explain how to access this digital library.

Similarly, tutorials are created for other facilities in the library such as E-Resources Digital Library- a collection of thousands of e-books, IITMK Library Blog (<http://iitmklibrary.blogspot.com>), E-Pathrika Newspaper Portal, etc

These tutorials are made available along with the corresponding services as hyperlink to them, so that users can access it easily.

### **8.2 e-learning for Library Staff**

Library gives one year training in the digital library development to fresh Library and Information Science graduates. The trainees are given orientation about different softwares by traditional way of classroom teaching, which are supplemented with online tutorials. Online tutorials are created for softwares such as GenIsisWeb, WinIsis, ABCD, Apache, Wink 2.0, and Blogging, Email systems etc. These detailed tutorials containing each and every steps, starting from the installation of these software and creating the final application.

Even though the lectures are given to the trainees about the softwares, these e-learning tutorials provide additional help to the trainees. Trainees can clear their doubts when they are working with software without the help of the instructor. This will save the time of both instructor and trainees.

### **8.3 Library Publicity**

In order to publicize the activities of the Library

Online tutorials are being provided illustrating the services of the Library, which help the library publicize its services without the need of the same service available in a remote location, even without Internet service.

Tutorials help us putting the details of the Library services in the Websites, without giving access to the services/resources.

### **8.4 Training for Library Professionals**

IITM-K Library organizes workshops and training programmes for library professionals. Library will be using the online tutorials as additional course material for these workshops and distribute the tutorials to the participants. These tutorials will be very useful for the learners in implementing the skill they learned during the training.

In order to train the professionals on building digital libraries, we have developed a tutorial package called "Interactive Online Tutorial on Building Digital Library using WinIsis and GenIsisWeb". IITM-K is currently developing online tutorials for the recently released Free and Open Source Library Automation Software called ABCD.

Major advantage of these tutorials is that no Internet connectivity is needed for playing these tutorials. So the tutorials can be distributed in CD ROMs also.

## **9. Local Language Initiatives**

IITMK library has taken initiatives in developing online tutorials in local languages. Tutorials created in local languages will be very much useful for illustrating different tools (e.g. Internet, Email, Blog etc) for common public. Tutorials developed in local languages are very useful for the Public Libraries and social welfare organizations. People who are not well versed in English can learn different software using the tutorials that are created

in local language. IITMK library has prepared Malayalam tutorials for Email and Blogging.

### 10. IITM-K Initiatives in Training on Online Tutorials

Compared to Libraries in abroad, Libraries in Indian are not using online tutorials extensively. It may be due to the lack of awareness of such tools or lack of knowledge on how to use these software. In order to build awareness on the application of Online tutorials, Digital Library and Information Services Division of IITMK organized a 'National Workshop on Developing Online Tutorials for Information Products and Services' during 29-30 November 2008. This workshop gave hands on training on building online tutorials using 'Wink'. Such training will be continued to professionals in future also. IITM-K library is also involved in building tutorials for other libraries or organizations on demand.

### 11. Conclusions

It is clear that online tutorials can reduce the time and effort used for user education programmes in libraries, and maximize the benefit much better than conventional user awareness methods. Though online tutorials are very much needed in this ever-growing information arena, it has not been effectively utilized by Indian library community. There is a need for much systematic awareness and training for the application and usefulness of the free software for Online Tutorial. 'Wink' is a promising software for Libraries and academic institutions.

For academic community like LIS Schools, it would be a very useful tool for providing e-learning on the softwares used in the Libraries. Demonstration of e-journals, Internet

services, digital libraries etc could be effectively demonstrated using such tutorials without the need of Internet.

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### About Author

**Mr. P Sainul Abideen,** Librarian, Indian Institute of Information Technology & Management-Kerala, (IITM-K) Thiruvananthapuram.  
E-mail: [sainul@iiitmk.ac.in](mailto:sainul@iiitmk.ac.in)

**Ms. T S Sreekutty,** Digital Library Trainee, Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management – Kerala, Trivandrum.  
E-mail: [sreekutty@iiitmk.ac.in](mailto:sreekutty@iiitmk.ac.in)

**Mr. T P Yunus,** Digital Library Trainee, Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management-Kerala (IITM-K),  
E-mail: [tpyunus@iiitmk.ac.in](mailto:tpyunus@iiitmk.ac.in)